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FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3638
INFO RUEHZO/AFRICAN UNION COLLECTIVE
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 0489
RUEHBS/AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS 3242
RUEHRB/AMEMBASSY RABAT 0897
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C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 000294

SIPDIS

STATE FOR AF/FO, AF/W, AND AF/RSA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/04/2019

TAGS: [PREL](#) [GN](#) [AU](#)

SUBJECT: AU SUMMIT: AF ACTING A/S CARTER MEETS WITH ECOWAS

Classified By: AMBASSADOR DONALD YAMAMOTO, REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D).

¶1. (C) Summary: AF Acting Assistant Secretary Phillip Carter met with Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Chair Mohamed Chambas February 2 on the margins of the African Union Summit. Carter thanked ECOWAS for its principled stand against the coup in Guinea and the two discussed elections assistance. Chambas also expressed concern about the situation in Guinea Bissau. End Summary.

¶2. (C) Carter said he appreciated the leadership ECOWAS had shown in refusing to accept the coup in Guinea. ECOWAS and the rest of the international community have an opportunity to turn the situation around. Chambas said it is not very encouraging. He is beginning to question how coherent the military junta is. "If they just open up a little, then we can work with them. On the contrary, they seem to be hardening their positions." Carter, speaking from his experience of having recently returned as Ambassador in Conakry, said the junta is insular, with no idea what is going on. Most of them do not know what they are doing, and the ones that do are up to no good. The USG has indications that narcotics traffickers are seeking to consolidate their grip on the country, which is a very dangerous development. Chambas said it would use the ECOWAS and AU resolution to move forward.

¶3. (C) Carter said the USG is thinking it would be possible to push for legislative elections in June, after which a constitutionally acceptable, interim government could be established. Then the country and the international community could plan for presidential elections within the year. He asked Chambas what the United States could do to help. Chambas mentioned elections. "We don't know to what extent the voter identification/registration process continues." Carter replied that we are already doing a lot with elections in Guinea but would see if we can identify new and additional resources.

¶4. (C) Chambas mentioned his preoccupation with narcotics trafficking and security sector reform in Guinea-Bissau. He is working on establishing a joint needs assessment team with a limited group to include the European Union, Spain, and Brazil. He also noted that, with Canada taking the lead on the donor side, ECOWAS is making progress with institutional reform.

¶5. (U) Acting A/S Carter has approved this message.
YAMAMOTO